Fince Rupert's Ring

About twenty years ago I held the rank of troop-sergeant-major in the First Lancers, the regiment being then quartered in Horneleigh. At that period full arrangements had been made for celebrating the marriage of our captain, Lord Dashotiffe, a very popular genial, and handsome young fellow, who had succeeded to the title on the death of his father, about two years The lady of the soldierpeer's choice was Miss Daisy Wylkyns, the daughter of Sir Pierce Wylkyns of Billoby hall, Yorkshire.

On the day before that fixed for the wedding the two subalterns of the troop and the requisite number of non-commissioned officers and men were, permission of the commanding officer, despatched by train to the hall, in order to form a guard of honor at the churchdoor during the time of the marriage, Upon our arrival a most sumptuous meal was provided for the rank and file in the servants' hall; and beds for the men, which were of the "shake-down" order, were provided in the ridingschool attached to the stables, about half a mile from the hall.

Between eight and nine in the evening, just as I was thinking of getting my men marched off to night quarters, the senior Beutenant, Mr. Gloster, sent for me and said: Sergeant-major, Lord Dasheliffe wishes a sentry to be placed in the library where the presents are laid out. Many of the articles are of great value, and he thinks it best to have them watched, in case of accident. So just pick out three of the men and form a guard. Lord Dashellife will remember them for their trouble, which may afford them some consolation, and any three will do." Accordingly I picked out three men, took command myself, and one trooper, by name Martin Clements, I ordered to go on duty

I bade Clements put on his sword, and we entered the spacious and beautifully fit up library. The sight that met my eyes was dazzling in the ex-A large table in the centre was literally covered with pieces of plate, from a solid silver service, presented by a prince of the blood-royal, to the modest inkstand we had subscribed for in our own troop. On several side tables were displayed numerous articles of jewelry, with tickets in front bearing the donors' names, representative of nearly all the best famfles in England. About a dozen genwere in the room, surrounding a tall, florid-faced, handsome old man, with well-cut, aristocratic features and the unmistakable bearing of a soldier. The butler, who was standing near, whispered to me: "That is Major-General Wylkyns, Sir Pierce's brother."

When the general saw me, he called out, "I perceive you have got your man on; very good." Then he said to the "Excuse me a moment, while I show the sergeant-major round," In st gracious and friendly manner the old officer pointed out to me all the valuables in detail. Then he stopped at one of the side tables, and picking Wylkyns approached accompanied by up a large emerald ring of very antique pattern, said, in a garrulous fashion: his sergeants. That is one of my gifts to my niece. You see isn't the stone magnificent? One of the finest I ever saw. Well, it presented to an ancestor of mine about this ring?" by Prince Rupert, some time after Naseby, for services rendered at the ed to Lieutenant Gloster just now. I believe the prince took it Bintrie. from his own finger, or something of When my aunt died, a couple of years ago, she bequeathed it to me; and now, having no children of my own I am giving it to my niece. No, by Jove! it fingers are a trifle gouty nowadays.

But see, sergeant-major"—and General

And place of the policy Wylkyns slipped the ring in rapid succession over all the digits of his left nuscles here. I'll tell you why. This ed in turn. And, General Wylkyns, I must search you first."

and so forth. It takes the place of the "Me!" exclaimed the surprised general hand I lost at Sobraon. I can fish, shoot, hunt, carve, box-do anything with it, in fact."

While I stood opposite to Clements, I heard the voluble general still talking to a knot of guests on the subject of the ring, when a young baronet, Sir Harry Beynell, a well-known character in society and on the turf, observed: "Look here, general; I wonder if that ring was ever consigned by your folks to the care of Messrs. A.— or some bygone uncle' in the same line of business as that dietinguished firm? Perhaps, according to the condition pertaining to a breach of contract in the shape of nonpayment of principal and interest, the real one may have been forfeited, and a sham one substituted, for the look of the thing.

General Wylkyns, appearing a trifle angry, responded: "By Jove! Beynell, I have heard stories of the same kind A rapid sourch was made at a light the ring before I is it the library last night." about diamonds! Outside the value of this emerald from its associations, I assure you it is intrinsically worth a

thousand pounds!" One of the guests now popped his head into the doorway, and cried: "I say, you fellows, come to the billiard room. There was immediately an exodus

the last to leave being the general. He had reached the corridor outside, when there was a noise as if he had fallen, and then I heard the old warrior giving vent to a volume of potent impreca-tions. I rushed outside and said to him: "Oh, I beg your parden, sir, but I thought I heard you tumble; I hope you aren't hurt, sir?"

He replied: "Not at all, sergeantmajor, thank you. My foot slipped on the polished oak floor. I wonder if I've broken my artificial hand?" Having rapidly felt it all over, he growled: "No I think not, for a marvel. I'm off to bed. Good-night, sergeant-major." Turning, I saw Clements at the Il-

brary door. "Sentry-go, sergeant-major," the man whispered; it's just

struck twelve."
"All right," I replied. Then I walked to the end of the corridor that ran parallel with the library, and ascending the stair, called the second man, whose name was Jones.

While I was relieving Clements, Sir Pierce Wylkyns came in with the but-The baronet remarked to me: "Sergeant-major, I think it will be better to lock up all the small articles in a cabinet. Williams here will clear them away. Hulloa!" he exclaimed excited-

ring?"

was missing!

oly he may have inadvertently placed in his pocket. He informed me, Sir that he was going to bed." Sir Pierce fumed for a minute, and the en hen said to the butler: "Just go and bulky."

Williams disappeared, and Sir Pierce egan carefully to place the smaller rticles of jewelry on a silver walter. When the butler returned, he said to Sir Pierce, it's all right."

"I dare say it is, Williams," remarked he baronet carelessly. When Sir Pierce had placed all the wels under lock and key, he bade me

ood-night, and retired. ils fair bride went off on their honeynoon, the peer sent me a sovereign, and five shillings for each man of the guard. He also gave orders that the her landlady. stroll round the town of Billoby, if they This indulgence was almost niversally taken advantage of.

I did not leave Sir Pierce's grounds, out instead, strolled about the garden and park. Late in the afternoon, when I was returning to the hall, I met a further detention of Clements, he was cotman, almost out of breath, who exdaimed, "Your officer, Mr. Gloster,

wishes to see you at once!"

I quickened my steps, and approachawkward business. General Wylkyns, the subject by Sir Pierce, denies that he took the ring out of the library last night, and avers that he laid it on the table again. Who was the sentry at

'Clements, sir," I answered. "Was he alone in the room at any eriod during that portion of the eve-

"Just a minute or two, eir," I answer d. "when I was outside ascertaining irst time, I am almost positive, traversed the whole length of the library to the door opposite the western corridor, in order to tell me that it was 'sentry

"Do you think the man could have the villiany and audacity to steal the ing?" excitedly queried Mr. Gloster. "Surely not, sir," I replied. "But of

this I am certain-I saw the ring last n Mr. Wylkyns' hand. while he was talking to Sir Harry Bey- Pil grant the man his furlough. nell, who was leaning over the table be side him. There was no other person near it, excepting, perhaps, the first relief, Jones, sir. As I was posting him, Sir, Pierce came in, and I remem ber the man walked about the room while Sir Pierce was speaking to me The third man, Tomlin, was asleep upstairs; he didn't go on until two."

At this instant Sir Pierce and General the local inspector of police and two of

General Wylkyns, who looked terribly cut up, said to me sternly: "Now sergeant-major, do you know anything

I replied: "Only, sir, what I mention saw it last in your hands."

The inspector interrupted: "Excuse the sort. Anyhow, the ring has been in my family for over two centuries. ries, and all the men of the guard of honor. Assuming the first sentry to have stolen it, he may have passed the ring to a comrade to avert detection. on't go on!" continued the general, Sergeants Price and Davis, go to the as he tried the ring over the glove on riding-school and carefully overhaul all the little finger of his right hand. "I the soldiers" values and pouch-belts. remember when it would, though. My You, sergeant-major, remain here, and And, please, don't allow a single whisper of the supposed theft to transpire A constable will be here immediately pand—"no chance of a swelling of the to assist me, when each will be search-"Me!" exclaimed the surprised gener-

"Yes, sir; you may have placed the ing in one of the pockets of your dress suit.

"I assure you, I examined it carefully few minutes ago."

"Still, there may be a hole in the lin-ing, and it may have slipped through. Stop, sir! Have you a valet here?" "No," answered the general, "Sir Pierce's man attended to the clothes were at the wedding. My dress suit,

chair in my dressing room." "Who had accesses your bedroom and dressing room after you left it this morning?"

which I had on last night, I left on a

"I've no idea; possibly a housemaid or a footman. But I give you my word of honor that I'm certain I laid down,

A rapid search was made of the men, cluding myself, but nothing came of

Clements stoutly and indignantly denied ever having seen the ring, except when General Wylkyns was holding it up for inspection.

I heard the general whisper to Mr. Gloster: "I wonder, now, if that satir-ical rogue Beynell has annexed the article as a practical joke? He's bad nough, but surely not so bad as that!" The missing ring threw a complete damper on the conclusion of our otherwise enjoyable outing, and all were

glad, consequently, when we entrained and rattled off to London, A day or two after our return to Horneleigh, and while the story of the lost ring was still the staple subject of parrack gossip, a telegram reached our mmanding officer from the Billoby police inspector, which read as follows: "Soldier, description answering to Clements, sent off registered letter while

Arrest him. Detective leaves

Clements, while vigorously protesting his innocence of the charge against him, was confined in the guard-room. When the Yorkshire detective who had charge of the case reached barracks, the prisoner was at once brought before the commanding officer. The man admitted having sent off a regis-

tered letter, containing half a sover-eign, to his sweetheart in London, whose business was that of a dress-maker, but who was out of a situation and required assistance. One five shil-"where on earth is that emerald lings he had received from Lord Dashcliffe, and the other he had saved out Sure enough, Prince Rupert's ring of his pay. The registration receipt, was missing! "I beg pardon, Sir Pierce," I remark-; "General Wylkyns had it in his guard. It bore the name "Emily Haw-

hand only a few minutes ago. Possi- kins," with the address, "Care of Mrs. Tucker, No. 612 Park street, London. The detective remarked; "My informant at the Billoby post-office says that the envelops you had registered was

'Yes," spoke the prisoner without asleep yet—and ask him to give you the hesitation. "I sent off with the half-ring." to read that I had received from my cousins in America. One contained an offer to buy my discharge. I crammed them in the envelope anyhow. his master; "I knocked at General Wyl-" continued Clements boldly, addressing tyn's door, Sir Pierce, and told him the commanding officer, "that night, or message. He called out, I'm in while on sentry in the library, I saw ed, and sha'n't get up!' I dare say, all that went on. The matter of the irr Pierce, it's all right." two-General Wylkyns and Sir Harry Beynell,

The accused man was detained in oustody until the dectective made inquiries in London. He speedily ascer-Next day, before Lord Dashcliffe and tained that Clements' story, in respect of it main details was perfectly true. The half-sovereign when it arrived had been at once paid by Miss Hawkins to The girl's room was troopers should be allowed out for a carefully searched, but nothing incriminating was found. Her former em-ployers, when applied to, assured the fficer that Miss Hawkins was a young person of unexceptionable respectabil

There being nothing to justify the at once released.

A dark rumor was now afloat-how t originated, no one could tell-that Sir Harry Beynell was the purloiner of ng the hall, perceived Mr. Gloster pac-ng about in front of the portice. "Ser-lusion made to the affair in a "society An al ing about in front of the portice. "Ser-lusion made to the affair in a "society" geant-major," he exclaimed, "this is an paper provoked an indignant denial from the baronet and a threat to horse who, after breakfast, was applied to on whip the editor. The fatter applied for a summons; and Sir Harry, in sequence, was bound over to keep the This episode had the effect of making still more public the evil re-

One day Clements applied for a furlough. Many, including myself, were still of opinion that he knew something bout the ring, and I took the liberty of stating my views to the colonel. The theory I advanced was that the man, the general had hurt himself, as I or rather his sweetheart, had the artieard him fall. Then Clements, for the cle secreted somewhere, and that Clements time, I am almost positive, traversents, when he proceeded on leave, meant to realize what he could on it and lear out of the country.

"Thank you, sergeant-major," an wered the colonel. "Your hypothesis is at least reasonable. I'll write at once to Sir Pierce Wylkyns, who will loubtless instruct some of those private-detectives fellows to keep an eye on Clements. Therefore, in the hopwas that the mystery may be cleared up,

Clements, after drawing whatever savings he had deposited in the regimental bank, obtained a month's leave and left for London, Sir Pierce Wyl kyns had given instructions to a well known private-detective agency in the metropolis; and from the time the suspected man left the barrack gate, was vigilantly shadowed. Late one afternoon a telegram reached the commanding officer, which contained the startling news: "Clements and girl arested. Sergeant-Major wanted at Bow Street to-morrow morning, ten," Therefore, acting upon orders, I caught the evening train to town, and reaching Victoria, put up at an adjacent coffee-

On my arrival next morning at Bow Street, I heard particulars of the arrest from a police sergeant on duty Clements, accompanied by his sweet peart, had been seen to enter the shop of a dealer in jewelry near Holborn who or some time had been suspected by the police of trafficking in stolen prop erty. The detective, looking through the window, perceived that the soldier nanded something like a ring to jeweler for inspection, and the latter took it aside, to submit it, presumably, the usual tests. Then the detective called to a passing policeman and in ormed him of his suspicions. The two entered the shop, and the man in blue demanded to see the article that Clements had offered for sale. The shopkeeper produced a cheap nine-carat article, set with garnets; and the soldier explained that he was exchanging it for a wedding-ring, and was prepared to pay any difference in value. (From inquiries made, it appeared that Clements was to have been married that very morning in St. Pancras church.) A police inspector having been called, and the particulars of the case detailed to him, it was decided to take all three into custody on suspl cion. The shop had been overhauled, and a large antique emerald ring discovered in a drawer, which was supposed to be the stolen valuable. The jeweler, despite his annoyance, apeared to be half amused, and averred that the emerald was spurious. Gene rai Wlykyns had been wired respecting identification of the missing ring, and had replied, stating that he had left Billoby for London by the last train, and would be in court during the ex-

amination of the prisoners. It was near midday when the case was called, and the suspected trio were placed in the dock. The court was growded, and I could perceive Sir Harry Beynell sitting in the counsel's seat, In company with a barrister whom he had employed to watch the case. Briefly, the inspector, the constable, and the private-detective gave their evidence I had just been called upon, when there was a bustle at the witnesses' door, and in pushed General Wylkyns and Lord Dashcliffe, the latter having returned from the continent that very morning. Both appeared to be in a condition of great excitement. The General, addressing the learned magistrate without ceremony, cried: "I'm very sorry, your Worship, but will you please stop the hearing of this case? I'm gratified to be able to say that the ring has been

There was what newspaper reporters call a "sensation" in court; the usher bawled "Silence!" and the magistrate leaned over his desk in an attitude of

The General went on: "Your Worship, I must tell you that I wear an ar-tificial left hand. I am a trifle excitable at times, and am apt to smash it, so I keep one or two in stock, in case of ac cident. Well, last night, your Worship, before starting for London, I packed up a damaged specimen, intendgers! I must inadvertently have slipped it on. Here is the ring, your Worship, presented by Prince Rupert, after Naseby, to one of my ancestors.

The soldier and the woman are discharged," abruptly interrupted the magistrate. This was followed by ap-

Turning to the police inspector, the bench said: "Do you wish the other minister?"

prisoner to be detained? Is there anything respecting him that requires in-

"No, your Worship," answered the inspector. "Only, in his shop we found a large emerald ring-"Which, your Worship, is spurious!" interrupted the jaweler.

vestigation?

ettle that question. I see Mr. Habakkuk of Hatton Garden in court. Per-"I shall be pleased to be guided by a

gentleman of Mr. Habakkuk's wellthe court suavely.

Mr. Habakkuk, who was waiting to give evidence in a charge of an attemptd diamond robbery, looked at the ring ing" to such "things." for a moment, and observed: "It is an imitation, and a very poor one, Worship, Gold may be worth fifteen shillings, or thereabouts.

"Discharged also," said the magistrate to the tradesman.

When Clements and his sweetheartpretty modest-looking girl she was, by the way-and I managed to elbow ur way out of the crowded court an into the passage, we saw the General and Lord Dashcliffe shaking hands with Sir Harry Beynell.

After General Wylkyns had profusely xpressed his regrets to the soldier Lord Dusheliffe added, on hearing that Rements intended leaving the service and that he had only been exchanging an old ring for a wedding-ring, as he was getting married, "Here is my present to you on this auspicious occasion; and the peer placed five sovereigns in lement's hand. This the General supplemented by a similar sum.

When Clements and his betrothed, pleased and happy, had taken their departure, the General whispered to me Sergeant-Major, I didn't wish to it in court, but the truth is I had taken too much wine that evening. I did break my hand when I fell in the passage; and when I got to my bedroom I wrapped it in paper, placed it in a port nanteau, and got another out. What a stupid business it has been, to be sure! "Wylkyns," interrupted Sir Harry Beynell in a sneering tone, "I have been

all but called a thief over this lost ring of yours; now I should like to know the value of the article." "What!" said the General sharply.
"It was valued at a thousand pounds a banker, who was introduced to mi

as an authority on such matters at the Angio-Indian club. At this moment Mr. Habakkuk was passing out of court, and Sir Harry Beynell, accosting him, said: "Would you be good enough, sir, to give your verdict on this famous emerald ring Kindly let the gentleman see it, Wyl-

"Certainly," responded the General, and he passed the historical bauble to Mr. Habakkuk. The latter, putting a magnifying

glass to his eye, intently examined the Then he said with a smile "Gentlemen, the value is about two guineas, and that's mostly for the set-

"Nonsensel" averily exclaimed the General, reddening. Sir Harry tittered, and Lord Dashcliffe appeared very in

Mr. Habakkuk quietly went on: "Sir, in my business we see queen things and possess queer secrets. If you knew as much as I do, you might be suspicious of the genuine character of the crown jewels. I think, General, your mother vas a Wielden, of Wielden Hall, Norfolk?-Well, your grandfather, Squire Wielden, as you know, was a great pal of the Prince Regent's, and went it fast and loose, and lost pots of money card-

"Yes, by Jove" stammered the Gen-"I'm suffering for the Squire's ec-

ntricities now." Well, for five hundred pounds the Squire sold the undiluted article to my partner, Mr. Joab's grand-uncle. Why I can trace the history of the stone ever Now, it is in the pos New York millionaire, who had it palmed off on him by an Amsterdam firm as a gem presented to Anne Boleyn by Henry VIII., and worn by that lady when she had her head struck off. Whoever the Squire employed to get up that rubbishy make-believe thing, I

can't say. It certainly couldn't have cost him much more than a fiver!" The General looked fairly crestfallen and the highly gratified Sir Harry Bey nell, after exclaiming, "So this has been delicious case of much ado about oothing!" burst into a mocking neal of

laughter. When Clements got his discharge Lord Dasheliffe procured him a situa tion in one of the government offices a

Whitehall. General Wylkyns took independen opinion respecting the emerald, but each authority applied to supported the statement of Mr. Habakkuk. The sto ry got into the papers, and, in conse the poor General was prodigiously chaffed about the business On one occasion, within the Anglo-Indian club, the fiery veteran got so an loyed at the banter he was being sub ected to, that he took from his pocket the degraded imposture of an helrloom erst supposed to have belonged to Prince Rupert, and tossed it into a roar ng fire!-Chamber's Journal.

A Woman's Life.

"He is dead?" "Oh! Hiss 'Lizbeth! and you alone with him?"

"Oh! Miss 'Lizbeth! and you alone She said this in a manner which cemed to imply that there was nothing trange in the fact that she was alone with him. She was always alone with him, was she not? Was it necesary that she open the doors and call

them all in because he was dying?

They passed from the narrow hall ino the front room, with its green paper hades, its worn carpet and meagre furniture. His bed had been moved down from the floor above when his last sickness had seized him, and here it had remained, a black wainut bedtend, with towering headboard, which shut out the light from one of the two windows in the room. This bedstead had been one of his few, his very few extravagances in years gone by, and in its dark shadow he lay now rigid He had been a stern, grizzled man in life, but the sternness then had been as very softness compared with the ing to have it repaired, when I found hard, cold outline of the face now upon the missing article on one of the finered window shade.

They moved about the room on tip oe, speaking in the hissing whispers onsidered appropriate by them in the 'When did it happen?" some one ask-

'Half an hour ago.' "Hadn't I better call the doctor or the

"I don't see what good they'd be." Another woman crept in silently, a shawl huddled about her head.

"I just heard," she whispered. They walted in silence for her to go n. She was the woman of the village who always officiated at the "laying soon out" of the dead. The reason for this abakno one had ever sought. Possibly the right was hers because she so enjoyed haps, to save trouble, he will give an the grewsome privilege. At least she clung to it tenaciously.

"Now, Miss 'Lisbeth, you just go up stairs and I'll tend to things," she said, known experience as a lapidary," spoke while the other women waited her commands, half resenting her cool assumption of control, but with a full consclousness of her capability in "tend-

> The bare little church, with its white walls and staring windows; its stiff pine pulpit painted a dingy yellow, with the minister's green upholstered chair behind it, was well filled the day of the funeral. A "burying" was not a thing to miss without grave cause. were old men and old women in the postulation congregation who had not missed a funeral within ten miles of them fifty years. They sat solemnly waiting for the minister to begin the service, nking close notice of the coffin and calculating its cost. Not a difficult prob-lem for them with their long experi-They also noticed the appearance of one mourner who sat directly in front of the pulpit alone, save for presence in her pew of the woman who had come to her huddled under a This strange woman always sat with the mourners as though she felt a claim upon the bodies of the dead until their final surrender to mother arth. But the dead man's daughter sat away from her companion, quite at the farthest end of the seat, as if she would be as much apart from them all in her present loneliness as she had en before. It was fifteen years since she had sat with them in the church,

RIBY. The minister arose and folded upon the open Bible his lean hands with their great veins and yellow joints. He prayed long and laboriously, his voic rising from a dole sing-song drawl into shout and then sinking into a whis-per. They wagged their heads knowngly in the pews and whispered to ne another that it was a "pow'ful ef-Toward the close of the prayer many eyes were turned expectantly toward the woman who sat alone. ninister was calling loudly for "the ost sheep who is not with us safe in the shelta' of Zion walls. Oh, Lord!" he wailed, "make Yo'h wah'nin' plain to er onseein' eyes that she may seek safety from the wrath to come. he woman heard or understood his said one of them. vords no acknowledgment to that fact touched her thin face.

and they looked at her now with curios

She sat with folded hands, her eye upon the narrow front of the box-like pulpit. Then the minister began his From the earliest dawn of the dead man's life, through his childscod, youth and manhood unto the last coment of his old age, the speaker ourneyed, going unctuously over the freary details of the meager, common distory. They all knew it well enough but they listened greedily, jealously fearful that the speaker might over-look a single incident in the man's dull When he had exhausted every story. period of his subject's life, the minister egan the apotheosis of the man. His roodness, his charity, his uprightness and above all his tirgless labors in the inevard of the Lord's were dwelt upon He had in truth been cruel and hard

They all knew this, but he had lived and died a member in good standing, and any other treatment of his characer by the preacher would have been a candalous thing, unheard of and not o be forgiven. At the close of his liscourse the minister turned his colorless eyes upon the woman who sat apart. "There was," he said, his voice alling into a slow and solemn drawl, there was one cross which our Lord and Master seen fit to bind upon the houlders of the brother who has just rone befo' us into the glory of the neavenly kingdum. A cross hard to ear, a cross whose liftin' he had wrestled for with the Lord Jesus often and nightily in prayer, but which Divine Providence seen fit to allow to remain upon the shoulders of his faithful son.

"It was, my brothers and sisters, the efusal of the only one of his kin to acept the Lord, to wash herself in the lood of the Lamb, to join with those who journey onward safe in the arms f Jesus into the glory of everlastin' ife," His voice had risen into a shout. 'The night is comin', the day is almost one. Oh! let us pray for them who falters and will not turn from the wrath befo'h it is too late." His voice sank suddenly into a whisper, and the words "too late" went hissing out over he heads of the people who sat with raning necks and knowing faces cruelly turned toward the woman, whose yes for a single instant had not left he front of the dingy yellow pulpit.

The hearse, with the one closed cartage of which the village boasted, noved slowly away from the church along the muddy road, followed by a straggling line of wagons. The majorty of the people lingered about the sat stiffly erect in the carriage, the minster facing her, at her side the woman who seemed to have such a strange love or the dead. This woman sat with her andkerchief pressed to her eyes, as if handkerchief pressed to her eyes, as if her cheeks, and her eyes, so pale and she must needs make amends for the tired now, had been blue and fresh ther's stony composure.

he bottom lands along the river, wound an autumn day, and the golden haze of loved and given up. that most glorious of seasons in the bright glow of the western sun brought monuments and scattered, sunken dull, red streak marked the track of graves, its rays enfolding with no melwing touch the group of sallow-faced narrorw, unlovely lives.

death.

As the procession crawled along the heavy road toward the cluster of houses upon the river's bank the minister, his great hands resting upon his knees, his pale eyes blinking solemnly, began: "E'liz'beth, you are left alone now."

She nodded her head in affirmation. "You haven't much of this world's "I've kept two of us from starvin' for

"Yo'h father was well fixed once, but the Lord seen fit to deprive him of his earthly treasures that he might lay ore store by them gifts which is above earthly price.

"He was a graspin' man and overreached himself." The woman beside her sniffed reproachfully and glanced at the minister with sorrowful air. The man stirred uneasily, and lifted a hand in ex-

"A daughter shouldn't judge. If you WAS enlightened by the spirit wouldn't be so lacking in Christian harity. She had endured much that long af-

ternoon, and she raised her eyes now "I've done my duty by him-I've done

my duty for twenty years without com-

"The pride of the onregenerate must be humbled," returned the minister. She vouchsafed no reply, and they went on in silence, the setting sun touching with softening light her worn ace and tired eyes.

The sun was low in the western sky then the two women reached the small house, once white, but now a dirty gray, with yellow streaks following the of the overlapping clapboards The black waters of the swiftly flowing river were flecked with red, and gold under the level rays of the sun, the A slight little woman, with tired rounded hills on the other side of the oves and dull brown hair streaked with stream were softly blue, toward the ast a white fog was rising. A flock of geese high in the air was flying swiftly southward, spread out in c great straggling V

The mournful cry of their leader reached the two women faintly, the flight of the wild geese was a sign of approaching winter, and they watched the black lines of the flying fowls until they vanished in the southern sky their wierd cry growing fainter and sadder and finally dying away, leaving the swish of the river against its muddy bank the only sound which troubled the quiet of the autumn twilight. Two women with husbed voices and funera faces waited inside the dingy front room of the house.

"It was a right smart gathering,"

"I never seen a finer," said the other. "And the minister was mighty powful," ventured the third in mournful

They looked at the dead man's daughter expectantly. Common decency surely required some expression of gratifled approval of the congregation and the sermon. But she was folding her shawl carefully, laying it upon the bed, alongside her rusty bonnet. She seemed not to have heard their voices. Then she sat stiffly by the window, looking out at the mud-clogged road.

"I hope you feel reconciled, Miss 'Liz beth," one of the women began. "I reckon I am. He's been awful hard to take care of," she replied, with her hard honesty. She turned her eyes away from the window and looked

wearily at her visitors. "It's supper time. There aln't any use of your staying with me.'

The three women arose, angry at their dismissal. "I 'lowed you'd want someone to stay with you the first night," said one of

them with a lugubrious sniff. T've got all the nights of my life to stay alone in. I bout as well begin

She watched them as they went away brough the deepening gloom, their heads together nodding wisely. They were talking about her, of course. She knew how hard and strange and unfeeling they were calling her. And as she sat alone by the window she wondered whether she was all these. The bed in the dark corner brought to her mind the picture of the man who had first quit it for his narrow bed upon the

hillside. She fancied that she saw his hard thin, yellow face upon the pillow now that she heard his querulous voice de manding her attention, upbraiding her for some fancied forgetfulness, fiercely denouncing her for her lack of "relig-ion." How hard he had been! As the woman's thoughts traveled back along the years she could not recall one kind word, one touch of thankfulness for her unremitting care, for her absolute immolation of life, hope, love upon the al-tar of "duty." Twenty years! what a

long time it seemed! She passed into the back room and pressed close to the little square lookglass which hung against its wall. The daylight was well-nigh gone, but she could yet discern the reflection of her face against the background of gray twilight. How old she looked! How sailow she had grown! There were great lines about her mouth and deep furrows between her eyes. And her hair-how dingy it was with its streaks of yellowish gray. Twenty years ago she had been proud of her hair. It had been bright and soft. She was twenty years old then, and there were cosas i then. She wondered if she had wept The road after leaving the village in their color and freshness away. Per haps that was the reason no tears were up the side of the bluff upon which the left for her father. She had shed them burying ground was situated. It was all along for the man whom she had

She did not return to the front room Missouri valley bathed the wide stretch | where the great bed loomed so wierdly of country upon which the cemetery in the gloom, but sat by the one window ooked down. A sky of marvelous blue in the little back room, half kitchen spread its canopy upon them, while the half dining room, looking out upon the river growing blacker and colder in the out in pittless detail the dreary little falling night as it flowed from out of ome of the dead with its tiptilted the west where a rapidly diminishing

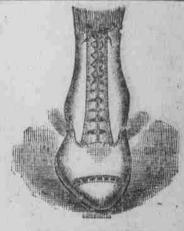
Twenty years since her mother died men and women in rusty and shapeless and her sister, selfish in her new life garb who clustered about the newly as a wife, had said that 'Lizbeth's duty made grave. They lifted their voices lay in their father's house. He migh and sang quaveringly amid the marry again or die in a few years strangely death-like stillness of the de- Surely it was not so hard for a young dining day. It was a dismal tune in girl to wait. So she had waited, her plaintive minors, and as they dragged lover fretting as lovers will, until on t out in unmusical and uncertain tones day she had awakened to the fact that seemed a fitting symbol of their a man's patience is not a woman's arrorw, unlovely lives. When the last There had been one awful night which clod of reddish clay had fallen upon the she remembered all these years with soblong mound they turned and walked shudder. A night when for the first away to leave their dead unnoticed un- and only time in her hard life, she had.

til another of the living should pass in- turned hotly upon the stern old man to the, to them, greater grimness of and told him of her wrecked girlhood, praying wildly for some help, for some

sympathy. She caught her breath sharply now as she recalled her father's bitter words. That same night her lover left. Fitteen years had come and gone since then. The great world had taken him, and whether he lived or had been claimed again by mother earth, the woman who sat and dreamed of the past alone in the dusk knew naught of him. five years. I reckon I can keep my-had practiced a woman's faithfulness; self," she replied stiffly. she had reaped a woman's hard reward. Afterward her sister died and left to her care a blue-eyed babe. How she had poured out upon that baby boy the pent-up mother-love within her. he gods in their wisdom had taken him too. In this still night, as she lived over again the years which were gone,

he seemed to feel the clasp of those baby arms about her nack and hear the crooning of that soft baby voice. And then came the long years of her father's illness, when she knew no moment of rest or peace. It had been a ong struggle between a long struggle between a loveless woman on one side and gaunt starvation on the other, without one word of gratitude to strengthen her. And they called her pard because she could not weep! She ooked at her hands, holding them up lose to her face. How misshapen and

ugly from toll they were! It was quite dark now and the river nurmured strangely under the wind which was creeping down from the north. Her hands fell back into her lap and two great tears coursed down er worn face-not for the man who lay under the stars in the little cemetery on the hill, but for her own vanished youth and love and hope.-The Chan-



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